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### Deposited in DRO:

27 March 2014

### Version of attached file:

Accepted Version

### Peer-review status of attached file:

Peer-reviewed

### Citation for published item:

Mills, Simon R.S. (2008) 'Tokkaekki Changdan : a musical goblin in east coast shaman ritual?', in Mandan Yi Hyegu Paksa Paeksu Kinyom Nonmunjip : a collection of essays to commemorate the 100th Birthday of Scholar Yi Hyegu. Seoul: Minsokwon.

### Further information on publisher's website:

<http://www.minsokwon.com/>

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## *Tokkaekki Changdan: A Musical Goblin in East Coast Shaman Ritual?*

By Simon Mills

In many cultures around the globe, there are certain musical patterns that are explicitly associated with non-musical phenomena on account of resemblance. In some cases, music makers intentionally mimic sounds from nature or from extra-musical human activity; these ‘sound signs’ are sometimes a very effective means of leading listeners towards particular feelings. In the Western Art music cannon, well-known examples are the sounds of nature that appear in Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony and the funeral bell that rings in Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique*.

There are also musical patterns that are considered to resemble non-sonic phenomena. Since antiquity and in various different cultures, people have asserted that interaction in music (between instruments or between pitches) somehow reflects the psychological dynamics of human social interaction (see Shepherd 1991: 12, 68). In addition, there are those musical patterns that are interpreted as resembling the physical attributes or behaviour of living beings or of natural phenomena. A well-known example from ethnomusicological literature is that of the Kaluli pygmies’ association of certain melodic shapes with the movement of water over waterfalls (see Feld 1988: 74-113).

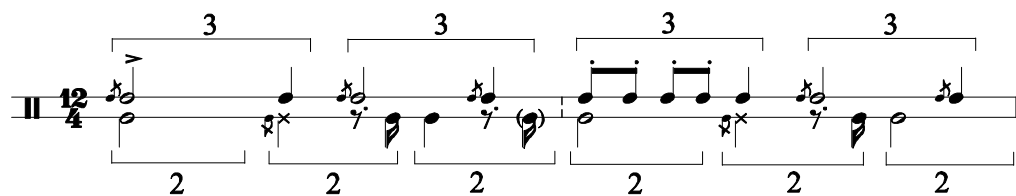
All musical parameters have analogue equivalents within the other sensory domains (sight, tactile sense, smell and taste) and this is why it is distinctly possible for musical features to resemble non-sonic phenomena (see Marks 1978: 7, 189). Pitch difference is perceived as the analogue of spatial difference (so pitches go up or down much like objects do); rhythm is a quality that is held in common by all changing entities (be they sonic or silent); sound quality (timbre) is the analogue of texture in materials (hence a sound-quality and a surface-quality may be similarly perceived as ‘soft’ for example); lastly, all stimuli have intensity, so loudness can be reminiscent of brightness, or sharpness, or pungency (see, for example, Cartarette 1978a and 1978b). In this way then, the human mind is able to establish associations between stimuli from entirely different sensory realms. So, for example, it is not difficult to imagine how a falling feather could be musically represented by a melody. Perhaps much of music’s meaning derives from its resemblances to non-musical aspects of our worlds (see Coker 1972: 153); the great neurologist, Vilayanur Ramachandran, has persuasively argued that the establishment of cross-modal associations is, indeed, a key means by which we understand our surroundings (see Ramachandran and Hubbard 2001).

In this article, I shall analyse a rhythmic phenomenon known as ‘*tokkaekki changdan*’, performed in the ritual music of hereditary *mudang* (Korean ‘shamans’) in the East Coast region of South Korea. I shall then investigate the possibility of this phenomenon being a musical representation of a non-musical, non-sonic entity – in particular, a type of Korean goblin called a ‘*tokkaebi*’. It is clear that this association is *not* acknowledged by most of the senior East Coast hereditary ritualists performing today (or perhaps all),

including the current Cultural Asset holder, Kim Yongt'aek; nowadays, '*tokkaekki*' is just a label used by the ritualists to denote a particular type of rhythmic pattern.<sup>1</sup> In this article, I will present the hypothesis that there *may* once have been an association, but that this has passed away with earlier generations.

## What is '*Tokkaekki*'?

When I was first in Korea, in 2000, researching the East Coast style of *mudang* ritual music, I spent a lot of time learning rhythmic variations for the hourglass drum (*changgo*),<sup>2</sup> concentrating in particular on variations for *tongsalp'uri* (literally, 'Eastern exorcism [music]') – a rhythmic cycle that is used a great deal during ritual. To begin with, my ritualist teachers, Kim Junghee and Kim Yongt'aek taught me a basic pattern (*kibon p'aet'ŏn*) that clearly expressed the strong-weak patterning of the cycle's underlying metrical structure. As my teachers explained, this type of pattern is typically used in performance as a point of departure and return, preceding and following episodes of improvisation:



As can be seen from the notation, the cycle's metrical structure is characterised by a pleasing compound/duple duality – the right hand demarcating groups of three while the left demarcates groups of two.<sup>3</sup>

Once I had mastered this basic pattern, my teachers focused their attention on teaching me how to improvise, providing me with new patterns with which to work, and advising me on how to shape my performance. At no point in East Coast ritual is the sequence of musical patterns rigidly prescribed; skill at improvisation is therefore crucial to engaging and sustaining the clients' interest.

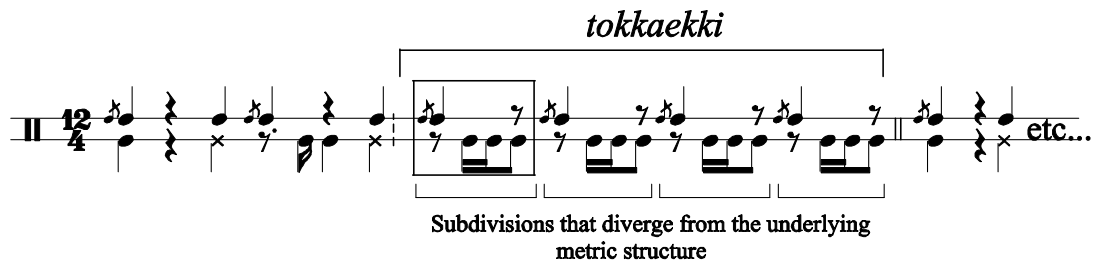
One highly distinctive feature of the East Coast ritual drumming style is the prevalence of 'knotty' variations (*nanhaehan karak*) with subdivisions that do not adhere to the rhythmic cycle's archetypical

<sup>1</sup> All of the East Coast hereditary ritualists that I have discussed *tokkaekki* with – the late Kim Sŏkch'ul, Kim Yongt'aek, Kim Junghee [Kim Chunghŭi], and the young generation adoptees, Chŏng Yŏllak and Cho Jonghun [Cho Chonghun] – thought of the term '*tokkaekki*' as belonging to their 'secret language' (*ŭnŏ*) lexicon; only those living and working within the East Coast hereditary *mudang* social institution use the term and know what it means (with a few exceptions). Still today, the ritualists maintain their secret language because it enables them to negotiate courses of action concerning ritual procedure and business, even when clients and outsiders are present (see also Ch'oe Kilsŏng 1981: 100 and Ha Hyogil 1985: 25).

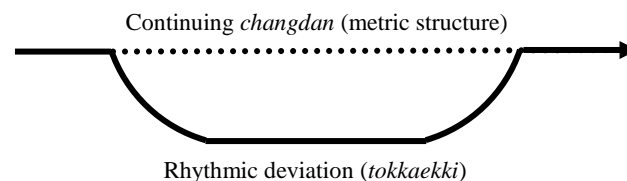
<sup>2</sup> The type of *changgo* used in East Coast ritual is markedly different from other mainland varieties. Its most distinguishing features are its diminutive size and the way in which the skin of the left drumhead (*kunp'yŏn*), which is always dog, is pulled unusually far over the body. The drummer, who functions as the leader of the instrumental ensemble, is accompanied by a player of the large gong (*chŭng*), which demarcates the most important beats in the music's rhythmic cycles. When the officiating ritualist is not singing, 2 to 6 players of the small hand-gong (*kkwaenggwari*) also contribute to the texture, together creating a polyrhythmic 'wall-of-sound' effect.

<sup>3</sup> Although the rhythmic cycle of *kutkŏri* has the same duration and metric subdivisions as *tongsalp'uri*, the weighting of the weak and strong beats in the two respective metric structures is different. Kim Yongt'aek explained to me that *kutkŏri* tends to involve a less pronounced compound/duple duality; the left hand tends to join the right in demarcating groups of 3.

metric structure.<sup>4</sup> After teaching me a selection of these variations, my teachers then introduced me to a rather special type of knotty variation, which they called ‘*tokkaekki changdan*’ or more often, just ‘*tokkaekki*’. They explained that the key defining feature of *tokkaekki* patterns is that they demarcate atypical subdivisions in the cycle with a degree of repetition sufficient to temporarily establish a new rhythmic order – as in the following example:



My teachers pointed out that such patterns create the effect of forming a deviation (*tolch'ul*) away from the musical path – a departure and a return.<sup>5</sup> In cases such as the above, where the new rhythmic order is only short-lived and the music’s pulse remains constant (with no change of tempo), the cycle’s metrical structure is able to continue “beneath the music, in your head”. The result is a rather extreme form of what Pantaleoni describes as “intentional conflict between concept and sound” (Pantaleoni 1985: 227):

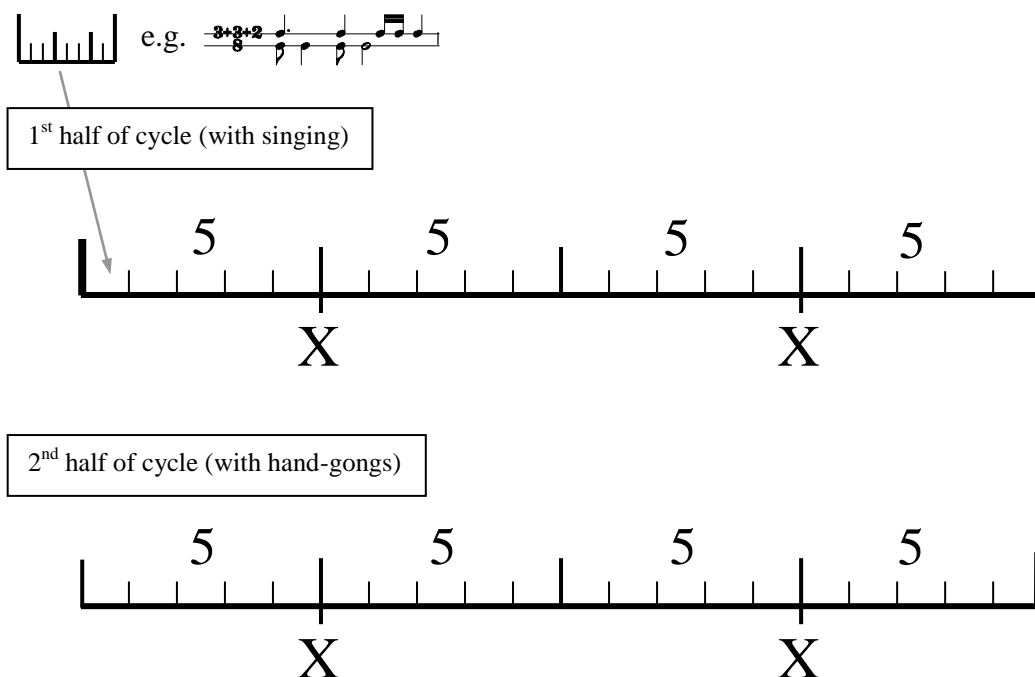


In contemporary East coast ritual performance, the most conspicuous examples of *tokkaekki* involve the introduction of surprisingly radical rhythmic restructuring, and the ensuing deviations are prolonged to such an extent that they may be termed ‘episodes’. Nowadays, such *tokkaekki* are almost exclusively performed within the first ‘chapter’ (*chang*) of *ch’ongbae changdan* (also known as *ch’ongbo changdan*) – a multi-part structure that acts as a framework for the delivery of extended sung prayers.

The rhythmic cycle of *ch’ongbae changdan*’s first chapter is represented overleaf, with ‘X’s indicating strokes on the large gong and vertical lines of varying thickness showing key structural subdivisions. Throughout the two halves of the cycle, the principle unit of measurement is 3+3+2.

<sup>4</sup> Mieczyslaw Kolinski coined the term ‘contrametric’ for this phenomenon – rhythmic patterning that contravenes the standard metric structure. He used the term ‘cometric’ for those patterns that adhere to the metric structure (1973).

<sup>5</sup> In his biography of Kim Sŏkch’ul, Yi Kyuwŏn similarly defines *tokkaekki* as musical deviations (‘*tolch’ul*’) (1995:484).



When it is included in performance, *tokkaeki* patterning is invariably concentrated in the second half of the cycle (though it often begins in the last quarter of the first half). In this way the new patterning does not obstruct the officiating *mudang*'s all-important song. The example notated below was recorded by the author at a *Pyŏlshin Kut* (East Coast community ritual) conducted in Ch'uksan village (North Kyŏngsang Province) in April 2000. It was played by the late Song Tongsuk, who sadly, passed away in 2006:

This block contains detailed musical notation. At the top left, a box labeled "2<sup>nd</sup> half of cycle (with hand-gongs)" points to a horizontal line representing the second half of the cycle. This line is divided into four segments, each labeled with a "5" above it, indicating a five-measure segment. Two vertical lines labeled "X" mark the boundaries of these segments. Below this, a musical staff shows the *Tokkaeki* patterning. The staff is divided into four segments, each labeled with a "5" above it, indicating a five-measure segment. Two vertical lines labeled "X" mark the boundaries of these segments. Arrows point from the *Tokkaeki* staff to the corresponding segments of the horizontal line above it. The *Tokkaeki* staff begins with the text "Tokkaekki..." and shows a sequence of notes and rests. The horizontal line above it shows a sequence of notes and rests, with the final segment labeled "4 3 5" instead of "5".

Here, one can see how Song suddenly breaks away from the usual 3+3+2 patterning, performs a short signal pattern, and then introduces a new type of patterning, which may be interpreted as being based on 5-beat units, incorporating a number of surprise stops-and-starts and a high density of unpredictable left-hand patterns – the latter being a particularly distinctive feature of Song’s style of drumming.<sup>6</sup> For the listener, the effect is undeniably disorienting. As with most *tokkaekki* episodes, this example closes with a short section of more regular patterning (here, based on 4-, 3- and 5-beat units), designed to instigate a smooth transition back to standard 3+3+2 patterning.

The next example of *tokkaekki*, played by Kim Yongt’aek,<sup>7</sup> also occurs within the context of *ch’öngbae changdan*’s first chapter:

1<sup>st</sup> half of cycle (with singing)

2<sup>nd</sup> half of cycle

<sup>6</sup> Faced with such rhythmic irregularity (lack of repeated material and structure), a paucity of unambiguous indicators of metrical structure (such as standard closing-patterns followed by strong first beats), and the absence of extra-sonic indicators (for example, video-taped dance steps or playing-movements, or the musician’s own personal explanation), the transcriber is more or less forced to resort to his/her own subjective perception of rhythmic organisation. I acknowledge that another analyst may well perceive a different construction.

<sup>7</sup> This excerpt is taken from track 4 (*Malwön kut*) of the following album: “None” (無) (2000) Woongjin Media (Sound Space/EumGongGan) WJAC-0367.

In this case, the internal patterning is less irregular than in the previous example; following the opening sequence, many of the 4-, 5- and 6-beat units are essentially variations of one another and metrical subdivisions are more clearly delineated by standard closing patterns and strong first-beats. More significantly, the same number of units falls between the large-gong strokes as during standard patterning (10 units). Furthermore, owing to the adoption of a new, slightly faster tempo at the inception of the *tokkaekki* episode, the unit- and cycle- duration actually remains largely unchanged (in real-time terms, rather than numbers of beats); the *tokkaekki*'s 5-beat units are of approximately equal duration to the standard 4-beat (3+3+2) units. Kim Yongt'aek explained to me that it is crucial that the drummer retain the cycle's 10-unit structure and duration in this way; the cycle's identity must not be lost. And yet it is evident that this *tokkaekki* still achieves a bewildering effect on the listener; the change of patterning is strikingly abrupt – happening mid-cycle and occurring in conjunction with the sudden increase of tempo – and the rapid irregular (5-based) patterning forms a stark contrast with what came before. To the listener, the existence of the aforementioned elements of continuity is actually far from obvious.<sup>8</sup>

It is not surprising that Kim Yongt'aek's *tokkaekki* patterning comes across as quite alien; it does, indeed, come from somewhere else entirely: the first chapter of *tchoshigye changdan*, a multi-part structure that is only ever played in *Ch'omangja kut*.<sup>9</sup> Right from the beginning of the musical diversion from the path, the listener inevitably perceives the new material as 'otherly' and as engendering a change of metre; the listener quickly loses sight of the 3+3+2-based metre and has to adjust the conceptual metric framework accordingly. This is a clear contrast with the examples given earlier, in which the metric framework was felt to be continuing within the mind as a background foil for the surface patterning.

The *tokkaekki* episode transcribed above has evidently become a standard feature of *ch'ŏngbae changdan* performance. Nowadays, the vast majority of East Coast ritual drummers (if not all of them) perform the exact same metric subdivisions and much the same internal patterning. If one listens to recordings of the late Kim Sŏkch'ul, one can hear that this great master also used the same subdivisions on occasion, although he invariably filled the framework with more unpredictable patterning.<sup>10</sup> In the following excerpt,<sup>11</sup> the most unexpected moments are marked:



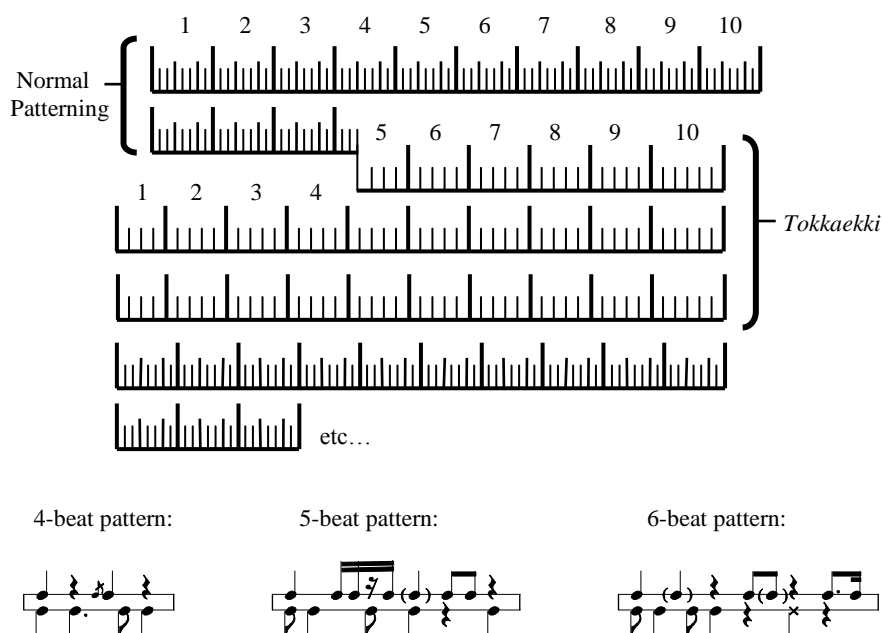
<sup>8</sup> The elements of structural continuity only became apparent to me after hours of transcription and discussion with ritualists, and I am quite well acquainted with the style, having studied and played it for about 6 years.

<sup>9</sup> *Ch'omangja kut* is a critically important ritual section in East Coast *Ogwi Kut*, a 'ritual for the dead' ('*saryŏng kut*') performed to guide an unhappy spirit (or spirits) to the Buddhist paradise – often referred to as *chŏngt'o*, *kŭngnak segye*, *sŏchŏnsŏyŏn'guk* or the 'other world' (*chŏsŭng*) – and to help enable the bereaved to get on with their lives.

<sup>10</sup> Nowadays, very few ritual drummers tease listeners' expectations nearly as much as Kim Sŏkch'ul did. However, there are a few individuals committed to keeping the old style alive – in particular, the young generation ritualist, Park Bomt'ae [Pak Pŏmt'ae], who had one-to-one lessons with Kim for 5 years, up until the latter's death in 2005.

<sup>11</sup> This excerpt is from track 2 (*Kolmaegi kut*) of *Tonghaean Pyŏlshin Kut*, CD 2, in the following collection: "Tonghaean Pyŏlshin Kut kwa Ogwi Kut", 1999, *Han'guk ūi Kut* No. 3, *Kungnip Kugakwŏn*.

On rare occasions, the same *tokkaekki* is also included in other multi-part musical structures – in particular, the first parts of *tojang* and *tŭrŏnggaengi changdan*,<sup>12</sup> both of which are closely related to *ch'ŏngbae changdan*. The following diagram (see overleaf) shows how Kim Junghee performs it within the context of *tŭrŏnggaengi*'s 10-unit cycle:



According to Kim Sŏkch'ul and Kim Yongt'aek, in the past, ritual drummers had far larger repertoires of *tokkaekki* patterns, both of the shorter kind (illustrated earlier through reference to *tongsalp'uri changdan*) and the more lengthy variety. The great folk music scholar, Yi Pohyŏng, similarly asserted that he felt *tokkaekki* to be something of a “lost art” (personal communication, June 2000). If one compares recordings of recently departed masters such as Kim Sŏkch'ul and Song Tongsuk with the playing of the younger generation performers today, it does indeed seem that there has been a general ‘evening-out’ of irregularity and loss of diversity – largely due to the influence of the other, more main-stream percussion genres, *p'ungmul* and *samullori*.

Wondering if there was any extra-musical significance to the *tokkaekki* phenomenon, I asked my teachers what the etymological derivation of the term ‘*tokkaekki*’ was. Either they did not know or they chose not to tell me, perhaps thinking that it was more important that I should properly understand the musical phenomenon instead. As a word, ‘*tokkaekki*’ is definitely rather unusual. Study of comprehensive Korean language dictionaries reveals that the only other words beginning with ‘*tokkae-*’ – aside from a number of dialect words from Cheju Island – are ‘*tokkaebi*’ (goblin) and various compound words all relating to the ‘*tokkaebi*’.<sup>13</sup> Phonetically, by far the closest word to ‘*tokkaekki*’, is ‘*tokkaegi*’. Intriguingly, this is an obscure dialect word for the goblin in South Kyŏngsang Province – key ritual territory for the East Coast

<sup>12</sup> *Tojang changdan* is performed in *Ch'omangja kut* (see footnote 9). It incorporates song text in which the deceased spirit declares that he/she has left behind his/her earthly life and is now ready to journey to paradise. *Tŭrŏnggaengi* is a purely instrumental structure (with no sung text), performed as the very first item in the overall ritual program. It is also included, in shortened form, in *Ch'omangja kut*.

<sup>13</sup> Excellent Korean language dictionaries are now available on the internet; see, for example, <http://krdic.naver.com/>. Otherwise, see: *P'yojun Kugŏ Sajŏn* [Dictionary of Korean Language], 2000, 3 vols. (Seoul: Tusan Tonga).



hereditary ritualists. The obvious question that arises from this discovery is: Could the musical phenomenon of *tokkaekki* actually have been named after a type of goblin?

## What is a ‘Tokkaebi’?

The *tokkaebi* is one of the most widely-known super-natural characters in Korea – a type of goblin that traditionally featured prominently in folk tales throughout the country. Kim Chongdae has researched the *tokkaebi*’s history and its occurrence in Korean folklore in great depth (1994). According to Kim, the first historical reference to the goblin appears in the mid-fifteenth century, in the text of a poem called “Carving the Sign of the Moon” (“*Wŏrin Sŏkbo*”). In this poem, the name ‘*totgabi*’ is used to denote a super-natural character. The meaning of this name is somewhat ambiguous: ‘*tot*’ could mean ‘fire’, ‘chief’, or ‘fickle’ (deriving from the pure Korean word ‘*tosŏp*’),<sup>14</sup> while ‘*abi*’ could mean either ‘seed’ or ‘man’ (Kim Chongdae 1994: 34-36). Significantly, all these possible interpretations conform to modern-day conceptions of the goblin. Since the 1960s, numerous oral tales featuring the goblin have been collected from all the South Korean provinces by pioneering folklorists such as Cho Chayong (2001) and, in these tales, two conceptions seem to dominate.

The first type of *tokkaebi* is an anthropomorphic being – often ugly – with a mischievous, unpredictable nature. If benevolent, the *tokkaebi* will be the source of great fortune; some *tokkaebis* are guardians of treasure and others are able to make riches appear through magic. If malevolent, the *tokkaebi* will cause disruption; some *tokkaebis* spread disease, others fight or destroy property, and others lead you off into unknown places (Kim Chongdae 1994: 306-332). This creature-type *tokkaebi* has numerous equivalents in European folklore, including the Irish Leprachaun and the German Kobold, both of which similarly tend to be conceived of as mischievous, unpredictable, and associated with treasure (see, for example, Dubois 2005). Still today, the *tokkaebi* makes occasional appearances in the popular media, particularly in children’s television programs and comic books.<sup>15</sup>



Horned *Tokkaebi*: Comic book illustration

<sup>14</sup> The etymological relationship between ‘*tosŏp*’ and ‘*tokkaebi*’ is detailed in the following dictionary: *Han’guk Munhwa Sangjŏng Sajŏn* [Dictionary of Korean Cultural Symbolism], 1992, 2 vols. (Seoul: Tonga Ch’ulp’ansa).

<sup>15</sup> The type of *tokkaebi* that is most commonly represented today has horns or a single protruberance in the middle of its head, and often also holds a magic stick. This conception of the *tokkaebi* was actually introduced from Japan during the Colonial period (1910-1945) (Kim Chongdae 1994: 144).

The second type of *tokkaebi* is a will-o'-the-wisp, sometimes known as a '*pul-tokkaebi*' ('fire *tokkaebi*') or '*tokkaebi pul*'. In contrast with the creature variety, this is a glowing incorporeal entity, sometimes



A Fire *Tokkaebi* (Will-o'-the-wisp): Comic book illustration

conceived of as one-legged; '*tokkakkwi*', an etymologically unrelated but similar sounding term, means 'one-legged ghost'. As with the creature variety, if benevolent, the *pul-tokkaebi* will lead the way to treasure; if malevolent, it will lead you off into the mountains or deep into a graveyard, and get you lost (see Kim Chongdae 1994: 306-332). Remarkably similar folklore relating to the will-o'-the-wisp can be found in many different cultures across the globe.<sup>16</sup> There are also stories in which the glowing light is interpreted as being a lantern, carried by the creature-type *tokkaebi*.

So, key defining features of all *tokkaebi* seem to be: other-worldliness, sudden dramatic apparition, rapid mischievous movement, and a risky nature that could lead one off into a perilous situation.<sup>17</sup> This is surely also a strikingly accurate description of the musical phenomenon, *tokkaekki*, as shown earlier.

## Other *Tokkaebi* in Music and Ritual

The notion of a musical pattern being likened to a goblin may initially seem farfetched. However, there is, in fact, another rhythmic variation technique that is still occasionally associated with the *tokkaebi* and which is similarly rooted in a traditional folk genre of the Southern provinces: the *p'ansori* technique known as '*tosŏp*' or '*tosŭp*' (lit. 'fickle'). When Yi Pohyŏng was introducing this technique to me, he began by drawing my attention to the etymological relationship between '*tosŏp*' and '*tokkaebi*' (mentioned above). He then proceeded to make colourful allusions to the goblin's mischievous behaviour as an aid to clarifying what the technique involved (Yi Pohyŏng, in interview, June 1999). Yi confirmed that some other teachers similarly made these associations. Intriguingly, it emerged that *tosŏp* is actually a very similar musical phenomenon to *tokkaekki*; it too involves a rhythmic deviation from the metric path, although here the barrel-drum (*puk*) player continues demarcating the standard metrical structure while the new, relatively unrelated rhythmic order is being articulated by the singer (ibid.).<sup>18</sup> Considered overall, the case of *tosŏp* makes *tokkaekki*'s relationship with the goblin seem like a far more viable possibility.

Given the *tokkaebi*'s appearance in *p'ansori* and its prevalence in folklore, it is not surprising to learn that it is recorded as sometimes having been incorporated in the rituals of the *mudang*; *mudang* have always

<sup>16</sup> Nowadays, many explain the widespread occurrence of will o'the wisp stories by claiming that the apparitions are based on natural phenomena: some suggest the spontaneous ignition of natural methane from rotting vegetation, through contact with natural hydrogen phosphide; others suggest bioluminescent or electrical origins (see, for example, <http://inamidst.com/lights/>). Of course, there are also numerous pseudo-scientific theories.

<sup>17</sup> As with most supernatural entities, the *tokkaebi* is usually understood to have a well-developed ability to bewitch (*hollida*). In some stories, the bewitched individual merely loses the ability to think for themselves and follows the *tokkaebi* without question; in other stories, the individual's consciousness is actually invaded by the *tokkaebi*, and their behaviour becomes erratic and *tokkaebi*-like (see, for example, Kim Chongdae 1994: 213, 318).

<sup>18</sup> *Tosŏp* is only performed in conjunction with faster rhythmic cycles, the singer adopting a much slower pace of delivery to create rhythmic tension (Hae-kyung Um 1992: 127; Yi Kŭnuk 1994). The technique is sometimes used to reflect emotional upset in the drama; thus, it can be heard in the "Song of Shimch'ŏng", in the episode where Shimch'ŏng's father is lamenting the passing of his wife.

tailored their practices to suit the interests and needs of their clients (the ‘folk’), using popular tales and myths to provide solutions to dilemmas. Both Kim Chongdae and Keith Howard detail a type of ritual called ‘*tokkaebi kut*’, which used to be performed in certain areas of South Chōlla Province (Kim Chongdae, 1994: 213-214, 218; Keith Howard 1990: 166). Howard’s informants explained to him that women villagers in Chindo used to perform the ritual as a means of eradicating virulent disease such as smallpox. The ritual would culminate with the villagers leading the *tokkaebi* – seen in this context as representing the source of impurity – away from the village by means of impure lures such as menstrual cloths or the sounds of broken musical instruments; the latter were thought to be attractive to the *tokkaebi*’s contrary sensibilities. Allegedly, this ritual became obsolete around 1945 (ibid.; Howard, in interview, February 2006).<sup>19</sup>

There is no reason to suppose that the *tokkaebi* would not have made occasional appearances in the folk ritual of the Eastern provinces also. Most scholars of *musok* (the customs of *mudang*) acknowledge a close cultural kinship between the South Western provinces (North and South Chōlla) and the South Eastern provinces (North and South Kyōngsang) (see, for example, Kim T’aegon 1982: 38; Ch’oe Kilsōng 1992: 139; Kim Inhoe 1985: 78). Unfortunately, however, the older generation masters, like Kim Sōkch’ul and Song Tongsuk, who may have been able to recall (or may, at least, have heard about) the *tokkaebi*’s appearance in the rituals of the East Coast region, have all passed away.

## Conclusion

There are a number of reasons to suppose that, in the past, the East Coast Hereditary *mudang* thought of the rhythmic phenomenon, *tokkaekki*, as a musical depiction of the Korean goblin, the *tokkaebi*. Firstly, the word ‘*tokkaekki*’ is phonetically extremely close to ‘*tokkaebi*’ and even closer to ‘*tokkaegi*’ – a dialect word for the goblin from the heart of the ritualists’ territory. Secondly, as analysis has shown, *tokkaekki* patterns seem to behave much like the typical goblins of folklore: they are alien entities that appear unexpectedly, move irregularly, and lead one away from the established path. And thirdly, *tokkaekki*, as a rhythmic technique, is very similar to *tosōp*, which is known to be related to the goblin. Perhaps then, the name ‘*tokkaekki*’ really is a relic from Old Korea, in which goblins and other supernatural beings featured much more in people’s lives and rituals; perhaps, with modernisation, the extra-musical significance of the name and the patterns themselves has been forgotten. Alternatively, of course, the aforementioned similarities could be entirely coincidental. It seems unlikely that anyone will ever know for sure.

Nowadays, it is generally thought that *tokkaekki* has no extra-musical significance at all. The bewildering patterns are, indeed, quite potent enough without any associations being made on the conscious level. However, in my mind at least, a relationship has been forged; whenever *tokkaekki* episodes begin, I imagine that a goblin has bewitched the drummer and is leading him (and us) off. Will we ever get back to the secure musical environment we knew before? This visualisation invariably adds to my enjoyment.

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<sup>19</sup> Kim Chongdae proposes another date for the disappearance of *tokkaebi kut* in Chindo Island: 1910 (1994: 213). Kim details other obsolete *tokkaebi* rituals also, from Sunch’ang (South Chōlla Province) and Cheju island (1994: 214-216, 225-226).

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